



Rep. Roger Bush

1999 SESSION REPORT



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<http://www.leg.wa.gov>

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2nd District

Dear Neighbors:

The state Legislature started the 1999 session on Jan. 11. We're scheduled to stay in session in Olympia through the end of April. I've taken a leave of absence from my job teaching 5th grade in the Bethel School District, and am enjoying the opportunity to serve you in the House of Representatives.

Over the next two years we'll be dealing with a unique situation — for only the second time in state history the House is split evenly between 49 Republicans and 49 Democrats. That means we have to cooperate on every single bill and every issue if we're going to get the people's business done.

The major issues facing the Legislature this year are:

- ✓ **Keeping a lid on state spending**
- ✓ **Striving for quality in education**
- ✓ **Making homes more affordable**
- ✓ **Providing property tax relief**

Inside this newsletter you can find information about the specific bills and issues I'm supporting on your behalf. When I introduce a bill it's often because a constituent has called me with a problem that I find other people are experiencing, and that can only be solved by changing or adding to existing law.

I hope you find this information helpful. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me by regular mail, e-mail or phone. I welcome your input.

It is a pleasure and an honor to serve you in the Legislature.

Sincerely,

State Representative Roger Bush
2nd Legislative District

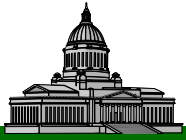
TOWN HALL MEETINGS

Please join me to discuss the issues you care about. Here's where I'll be, and when:

March 20
1:00 - 2:30 p.m.
Graham Library
9202 224th E.
Graham, WA

3:00 - 4:30 p.m.
Parkland/Spanaway Library
13718 Pacific Ave. S.
Tacoma, WA

I look forward to seeing you!



Rep. Roger Bush

2nd District

YOU'RE MAKING A DIFFERENCE!

Many of the bills I introduce are a direct result of my conversations with you. Often when I talk with constituents about problems they're experiencing, I find that other people are having similar problems and those problems can sometimes be solved or helped by changing state law. These bills are great examples of democracy in action.

★ *Funding for UW - Tacoma*

You may either attend or know someone who attends the University of Washington Tacoma branch campus. UWT is a vital educational resource for South Sound residents. For many local students, it is their only option — they don't have the time or money to travel to the main campus in Seattle. UWT is so popular that it is now beyond capacity and needs \$76.4 million to construct new buildings. The governor has said he would only fund half that amount, but now even this amount is in danger. I'm working with all South Sound legislators from both parties to secure increased funding. As a member of the Capital Budget Committee, which oversees state facilities, I can be a strong voice for UWT expansion.

★ *Consumer protection*

If you use a computer and the Internet, you've probably been barraged by the bothersome e-mails know as "spam." Spam is unsolicited e-mail which often contains offensive, false or misleading information. Spam is not only annoying, but it is also an invasion of privacy. I've heard from many of you who are disgusted by the unsolicited e-mails you're receiving. Last year I got so fed up with the spam I was getting on my home, office and school computers that I wrote a groundbreaking bill to give people recourse against spam. This year, based on the recommendations of an e-mail task force, I have introduced another bill adding new consumer protections to the law.

★ *Cracking down on crime, protecting victims*

I've authored two crime bills this year that are based on conversations I've had with some of you. The first would prevent persons charged with crimes from using drunkenness as an excuse for their behavior. The second would give theft victims the means to recover their stolen property from pawnbrokers and second-hand dealers.

★ *Cleaning up voter lists*

Thanks to many of you, I've become aware that some of our voter registration rolls are not accurate. I'm introducing a bill to make sure the lists are regularly maintained and free of irregularities. It would require counties to regularly remove the names of deceased people from the lists, and prevent voters from being registered in more than one county at the same time.

★ *Help for disabled vets*

My veterans' bill exempts 100-percent-disabled veterans, as well as former prisoners of war, from vehicle emissions testing fees. It also enhances the existing license plate fee exemptions for 100-percent-disabled veterans by omitting the requirement that they must have served during war time. Those who have been disabled during service to our country deserve this privilege, regardless of the era in which they served.



Rep. Bush at a committee hearing

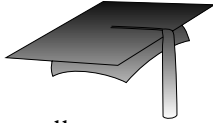
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OTHER MAJOR ISSUES THIS YEAR:

Improving Education

I know how important education is to you. As an elementary school teacher, I am also concerned about how well we educate our children. My focus this year will be on *accountability* and *achievement*.



I believe we need stronger achievement standards for our students. Recent fourth-grade test results in reading, math, science and other core subjects show that students are not learning what they should, and are not gaining the skills they need to succeed in life. I would like to see the Legislature establish strong achievement standards for students. Such standards are lacking in our current system, and I think they are important tools for helping children be the best students possible. Also important are competency tests for new teachers — every teacher should demonstrate knowledge of the subjects he or she will be teaching before entering the classroom.

School violence

I'm supporting legislation this year to make sure our schools are safe. There are several school safety bills this year that are aimed at identifying potentially violent students and stopping them before they attack.

These bills include: increasing communications between schools and local police so the police can let school officials know if a particular student is dangerous; allowing police to check a student's locker if they have probable cause to believe the student has a weapon; allowing schools to notify law enforcement immediately if a student brings a weapon to school or makes threats of violence; and requiring the local court to order a psychological evaluation of the student if he or she is charged with a crime.

Education fact:

Nearly half our state's general fund budget — 46.2 percent, \$8.8 billion — goes to K-12 education.

Property tax relief

High property taxes continue to plague those of you who own homes. You've probably been hit with rapid increases in your property taxes as the local real estate market heats up. Large spikes in assessed values can even result in people being taxed out of their homes.

Since Referendum 47 — the property tax limitation measure — passed in 1997, many homeowners have still seen their tax bills increase. Along with other legislators, I'm concerned that some local governments are not limiting tax increases as they should. This year, I support efforts to clarify and strengthen R-47's property tax limitations.

Controlling state spending

You and your family must live within a budget, and so should state government. Thanks to Initiative 601, the voter-passed measure that controls state spending to the rate of inflation and population growth, our government must — like you — stay within budget limits.

This year I am working to maintain state spending limits. I know that every dollar Olympia spends is a dollar taken out of your pocket.

High spending requires higher taxes, and that's why I want to limit government spending and keep your tax bill in check.

Making homes more affordable

As more people move to the South Sound and government regulations restrict new home building, many of you may find yourselves squeezed out of the housing market. If you already own a home, your home's assessed value and your property taxes, have probably gone up. I believe we must reverse these trends, and give every citizen — especially first-time homebuyers — a shot at the American dream.

I support making laws more flexible so it's not so difficult and expensive to build single-family homes. I'm also in favor of reducing some of the government regulations and fees that make home prices so out of reach for many citizens.

Did you know?



Washington state ranks 8th worst in the nation for high taxes. You must work until May 13 to pay off your federal, state and local tax burden.

WHAT ARE YOU INTERESTED IN?

One of the most important parts of my job is communicating with you. If you'd like to receive more information from me, please take the time to put a check mark next to the issue or issues that interest you. You can write your address in the space provided or, if you have an e-mail address and would like to receive information electronically, please make a note of it. Once you've completed this survey, you can mail it back to me at 415 John L. O'Brien Building, Olympia, WA 98504. Thanks for your time!

- ☐ Taxes & spending
- ☐ Education
- ☐ Transportation
- ☐ Housing/ Land use
- ☐ Senior issues
- ☐ Health care
- ☐ Crime
- ☐ Technology
- ☐ Hunting/2nd Amendment
- ☐ Environment
- ☐ Other: _____

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